1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

or fruits, or kick them about, or perhaps improvise syphons out of bamboo. Very often at feasts and large gatherings half a dozen children will play simultaneously at the same thing, but each playing by himself. At the numerous feasts and ceremonies I was present at over three months I only once saw children playing together, and this was a tug-of-war which lasted two or three minutes.

One of the chief pursuits of the older boys is the imitating of bird calls and the catching of small birds, usually in bamboo and thread snares. Nearly every boy over the age of nine could imitate bird calls accurately through whistling, and some of them were extraordinarily good at it; Chimpet in particular was so exact that unless I looked I could never tell whether it was a boy or a bird calling. Besides this direct imitation of bird calls, which is often used to lure birds to snares, the Lepchas have nonsense-syllable equivalents (similar to our *tu-wit to-whoo*), most of them extremely unlike the calls they represented, though the Lepchas maintained they were accurate. If the boys catch edible birds in their snares they take them home as presents to their mothers. A few of the older boys also learn to make and play bamboo flutes, receiving instruction from some older brother or friend.

When children do play together it is always an imitation of adult life (the one rare exception is the imitation of fighting animals). The courtyard outside the house is the favourite scene for these plays; using small sticks or bamboos which they cut with their little knives they play at building houses or making bridges or at fencing fields; at other times they may intimate a marriage or the performance of some religious ceremony. These plays are relatively rare, for they demand the simultaneous liberty of four or five children, which does not occur very often. They hold very little place in the childhood memories of adults. The chief things adults seem to remember from their childhood are physical mishaps, usually from falling, and being punished; nearly all adults remember being carried by their elders before they could walk properly.

Children between the ages of five and ten have a special almost private vocabulary which they use in talking to one another and which is much employed in their plays. Part of this vocabulary is baby words—deformations of ordinary Lepcha speech and onomatopoeic words; the rest is made up of rather violent terms of abuse—*pahoo ʒo*, may you be a feast for devils!, *kan-tit*, heap of

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

192 195 dirt !—and so on. As a child grows up he will completely abandon this language, and older people seem quite honestly to forget it. Rather like English preparatory school slang, these words only have currency during a few years of the life of the individual; they are taught to the young recruits of the childhood-group, and dropped as the child takes his place amongst the grown-ups: they are always in currency but unused and ignored by three-quarters of the population.

857 864 A certain number of these plays are sexual; thus the play of marriage always ends in simulated copulation; if the 'bride' is another boy, the children tie their penises together. From about the age of ten children at marriage feasts and similar gatherings are [839] likely to sort themselves into pairs and attempt copulation; there is also a certain amount of mutual masturbation among boys. (Everybody, young and old alike, denied the practice of adolescent masturbation, and since they were perfectly frank on all other questions I have no reason to suppose that they were not telling the truth.) Adult Lepchas consider such sex-play extremely funny, [522] though very childish; far from disapproving of the children, they are more likely to egg them on.

A ten-year-old child should know perfectly well the permissible and forbidden sexual partners in the neighbourhood; there is the general prohibition against sleeping with *num-neu*, and usually also a catalogue of permissible partners. In point of fact there is considerable variation of the age at which the incest barriers are recognised concretely; some nine-year-old children knew their relationship to everybody in the village, while twelve-year-old Ribu, for example, though he knew that he must not sleep with his *num-neu* was quite vague as to what people were actually included in that term. Ribu's ignorance may possibly be explained by the fact that his father was dead; it is essentially the rôle of the father to instruct his son in the rules of incest, and possibly Patek, his seventeen-year-old brother, had not done so.

857 Although adults never play with children, the children showed great pleasure when I used to play with them, and after I had been in Lingthem about six weeks used to manifest obvious excitement at my arrival, and if I was engaged in something else would do all they could to provoke me to play with them. The chief game that I used to play was to pretend to chase them; I would make one or two menacing steps in their direction, whereupon they would run about a quarter of a mile away, shrieking with laughter, and then

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

sickness or misfortune befell, therefore deemed it requisite to propitiate them, which they did by offerings of rice, etc. The first fruits of the season were always offered to the Good Spirit. I may state that the purity of their belief was, at a period antecedent to our arrival, somewhat perverted by the introduction from Tibet of the Buddist religion; it has, and still has, however, but little hold on them. . . .

"The British Government has again conferred on the Sikkim ruler an annual and larger allowance, to be enjoyed as long as order is maintained in his dominions. Since then the country has become more tranquil and, as far as the snows (but no farther), is again thrown open to visitors. Sikkim, however, is fast deteriorating. The influx of the Bhutias has increased, and the power of the Buddhists has become firmly established; the Gurkhas have also commenced to settle in it, and the grandest and most glorious scenery in the world is becoming completely destroyed. With the destruction of the forests in Sikkim, the charm of the country will pass away, the climate will change, and unless speedy measures be taken to prevent it, the Lepchas will pine, and in time cease to exist. Much more might be said, but enough has been represented to account for the deplorable fall of the Lepchas.

"Of the language I cannot speak too highly. The simple and primitive state in which the Lepchas lived is admirably shown. It has no primary words (beyond the words for gold and silver) to express money, merchants or merchandise, fairs or markets. Their peaceful and gentle character is evinced by their numerous terms of tenderness and compassion, and by the fact that not one word of abuse exists in their language. . . . Of all the almost inconceivable diversity of trees with which the hills are covered; of all the almost incalculable variety of plants and flowers with which the forests are filled; the Lepchas can tell you the names of all, they can distinguish at a glance the difference in the species of each genus of plants, which would require the skill of a practised botanist to perceive; and this information

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of course, in addition to the actual cash contributed by the guests at the *Ong kay* already described.

There is a modified form of betrothal ceremony known as *Ah-kut*, which is done by people who cannot afford the full *Ashyek* payments. It consists in the presentation of one pig's carcass to the bride's parents. No one would willingly be married by means of *Ah-kut*, which may be compared with our marriage by Registrar, if he could possibly afford to carry out the full ceremony, for it is a point of honour with Lepchas to entertain one's friends to the full limit of one's purse; and a failure to do so, should funds be available, would be to stamp oneself as a mean fellow and a bad co-operator. *Ah-kut*, however, constitutes full legal marriage, and no further ceremony is necessary.

Except for the additional wives a man may acquire by inheritance Lepchas do not normally marry a second wife unless the first proves to be childless. The custom of marrying additional wives would appear to be an importation, probably through contact with Nepalis, for the language does not contain any specific word to denote a second wife, the Nepali word *Kanchi* being commonly used for this purpose. I am, of course, aware that it is dangerous to base an hypothesis of this sort on linguistic evidence alone; but it is significant that in other parts of Sikkim and adjacent British India Lepchas are monogamous except for the additional wives some acquire by inheritance.

In Jongu it appears that a childless woman nearly always induces her husband to marry again. If possible he will take one of his first wife's sisters, or possibly a niece; but in any case he should try and obtain some sort of relative of his wife, since this arrangement is thought to cause less domestic friction than might otherwise be the case. It sometimes happens, however, that a man decides to remarry without reference to his first wife (as in the case of Aga, for instance), in which case the new wife must give a present, known as *Thim seut*. It does not take any special form. The new wife should also give something to the eldest child of the first wife.

10: Waddell G-5 (1891) 1899 AK5 Lepcha AK5

212 114 designed it from the Tibetan and Nepalese forms of the Indian alphabet. It imperfectly represents many of the Lepcha sounds, and especially so in its romanized equivalents as given by Mr. MAINWARING, in his grammar above mentioned. This was particularly noticeable when I took down the spoken words directly from the lips of the identical men who had been Mr. MAINWARING's chief informants. Their pronunciation of many of the words differed considerably from his record, especially in the vowel sounds. Mr. M. himself partially admitted to me this difference, when I confronted him with these men; but he excused himself by alleging that none of the Lepchas knew their own language properly, and he added, when he kept a school for Lepchas at Darjeeling, he never could get them to pronounce their own words aright!

114 194 Indeed, it was evident that the enthusiastic Mr. MAINWARING, in addition to arbitrarily altering the Lepcha language, and subordinating the actual facts to his theories on the subject, did not distinguish clearly many of the common vowel sounds. [1]) To express however by any system of transliteration the rich vowel sounds of the soft Lepcha speech with its melodious cadences is extremely difficult. Most of the vowels are clearly diphthongs and triphthongs [2]), so much so as to suggest the possibility that they represent contracted forms of longer words from which some of the consonants may have dropped out in the wear and tear of use through many ages, when unfixed by writing. Little phonetic decay, however, seems to have occurred during the past 180 years or so, judging from the written forms found in the first Lepcha book, which appeared under the hybrid Tibetan-title, the *Tashe-sung* and which is believed to have been composed about that date [3]), certainly not earlier.

194 Moreover, it does not seem to have been recognised that the Lepcha speech is distinctly tonic, abounding in homonyms, one word having a variety of meanings according to the tone in which it is uttered. These tones I have not attempted to indicate here, as I have not had time to study the language in sufficient detail for this purpose. And in view of the comparatively recent introduction of the so-called alphabet, I have preferred instead of this latter to give here the spoken forms, in the roman character, as noted down phonetically by myself according to the generally recognized system of transliteration [4]); altough I also give the written text of the songs for reference.

●192 The poverty of words in the Lepcha language in striking, but not more than one would expect in the language of such primitive people. Their scanty stock of verbal-roots

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[1]) Thus the word for 'a good spirit', which is clearly pronounced by the Lepchas as *Rôm* or *Rôôm*, was not only spelt, but pronounced by Mr. M. as '*Rom*' or '*Room*'. Again *Tak* or *Tiak* 'the head' is never pronomced *Tuk* or *Tyuk* as spelt by Mr. M. Nor is *Pan-di* 'a queen' ever pronounced *Pundi*, which only obscures its etymological relationship to *Pan-no* 'a king'. Similarly *Kap* 'young', *Sak-dam*, 'world', *Sa-nâ* 'a bear', *Mass* or *Môn* 'flesh-meat', *L'o* a 'cool hill', above about 7,000 feet elevation, *Kyung* a hamlet, '*Sa-ber*' a musk-deer; *Pak-s'ok*, 'a jungle', *Tak-man* 'a Lama', are never pronounced *Kup*, *Suk-dum*, *Sa-na*, *Mân*, *Hlo*, *Kyong*, *Sa-bur*, *Puk-suk*, *Tuk-mun*, as given by Mr. M.

[2]) Thus the word for 'a spirit' seems to be often pronounced '*Raolm*'.

[3]) The general nature of this and some other Lepcha books were first indicated by me (in Gazetteer of Sikhim 1894, p. 208; and Buddhism of Tibet London 1895 p. 166). A chapter of this booklet has been published with a Tibetan and German translation in the Toung-Pao (1896) by Professor GRÜNWEDEL, who has shown that it contains a version of the *Suppâra Jâtaka*. It teems however with Tibetan words and the Sikhimese forms of the latter. Nor can its authority for particular forms of words be taken too strictly, for it was never printed, and none of its extant manuscript copies are perhaps very old. Indeed most of these have been written by pupils of Mr. MAINWARING himself.

[104] [4]) Is generally the same as that adopted by the Royal Asiatic Society of London, except for the letter ä, and ch for c.

192 denotes the chief objects in nature and their relationships, the trees, plants and animals, and suffices for their easily satisfied physical wants. A characteristic and suggestive word is their name for a 'hunter' which is 'the flesh-meat-pursuing father' (*Maon-riăk bo*) and the word father itself means 'the giver'. There are so few abstract names, that it is almost impossible to express many abstract ideas in their language. Hence the first Lepcha book, the *Tashe sung* or 'Scripture of the Lepcha God *Tashi*', which was composed by a Tibetan Lama and which treated of Lamaistic Buddhism, was forced to borrow words freely from the Tibetan. Indeed the second part of this book-title is pure Tibetan. The large extent to which this borrowing has been carried on in the so-called Lepcha books was not fully realized by Mr. MAINWARING. For I found, on inspecting his manuscript Lepcha-English Dictionary, that fully half of the words which he believed to be Lepcha were in reality Tibetan, either pure primitive Tibetan, or the corrupt Sikhimese dialect of this latter language [1]), and the inclusion of such words tended to mislead in that it made the Lepcha appear somewhat similar in roots and structure to the Tibetan while it is in fact very different.

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The very ancient nature of their songs is evident from the fact that they preserve many archaic words and phrases, the meaning of which is now completely forgotten by the Lepchas themselves, who, however, still pride themselves in using them, although they no longer know their sense.

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These archaic words and phrases usually occupy the position of adjectives or qualifying phrases, or nouns in opposition, which are prefixed or affixed to a word possessing a well known meaning, so that these archaic words are treated as redundant. They are called by Mr. MAINWARING 'figurative' expressions, and he instances as an example the phrases 'to close the eyes' and 'to be a stiff one' as prefixes to the root 'to die' whilst the affixes are considered by him to be mere 'expletives' and often without 'distinct signification'. To some extent they are perhaps metaphorical, [2]) though generally, I think, they may prove to be descriptive.

101 192

One of the commonest of these so-called *Tang-bor* expressions is the prefix to the tribal name, namely '*Mo-tan-chi' Rong*. If you ask a Lepcha, what is a "Rong", what is the meaning of '*Mo-tan-chi*', he always replies that is has no meaning or sense whatever. To me however it seems, that the first two syllables are clearly the roots for 'Mother' and 'flesh' (*Mo* + *tan*); and *chi* although now ordinarily used for 'spirit' in liquor, may originally have meant animal spirits, 'inspirited or cheerful'. Thus the designation of the tribe would mean 'the (one) Mother-flesh (or consanguineous) jolly Lepchas'; if his hypothesis be correct, and it has much in its favour, the prominence herein given in the tribal designa-

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[1]) Thus '*Sa-ud-tap*' is given as Lepcha and the equivalent of Tibetan '*p'yag 'ts'al*', to pray; but both these phrases are Tibetan and neither of them really means to pray — the last being a salutation with the hands, and the former is the vulgar Sikhimese pronunciation of the Tibetan *gsol-ba-teb*, to make a request. Cf. JÄSCHKE's Dict. 279.

Such words will doubtless be omitted by Professor GRÜNWEDEL in editing this unquestionable valuable work of Mr. M. And it is to be hoped that the forthcoming dictionary may be arranged in the order of the European alphabet so as to make it more generally useful as a work of reference; for Lepcha, as we have seen, has practically no character of its own, and certainly to print its vocabulary in the order of the Indian alphabet seems undesirable, as the language is structurally so different from either the Indian or Tibetan.

[2]) The Kafir speech frequently employs metaphorical expressives. MAX MÜLLER's Science of Language 5th ed. II. 375.

10: Waddell G-5 (1891) 1899 AK5 Lepcha AK5

tion to the word 'Mother' is interesting, because customs are to be found amongst the Lepchas which appear to be vestiges of the primitive-social institution of Matriarchy or the mother-ship of clans; whilst this institution still flourishes amongst their co-related tribes in the neighbouring Garo-hills, who trace their descent through their mothers and not through their fathers. Thus, as apparent vestiges of matriarchy amongst the Lepchas, I find still surviving the usage of female suitorship, in which the young woman proposes marriage by offering to the man selected a basket of eggs; personal inclination in the choice of a husband; monogamy as a rule only relaxed in case the wife proves barren, tribal endogamy, avoidance of girl's mother, and not unfrequent Teknonymy whereby the father is called after his child — thus the father of Tak-li-ap (*Tak-li-ap bo*). Moreover all the tribal groups (*a-pit*), of which there are several scores, bear the affix 'mother' (*mo*)[1]), although the proper name in this group title is territorial, the name of a particular valley or glen or hillside; and their grouping is itself merely territorial and has no significance as to marriage or true tribal division. Instances of such groups are 'The Wormwood mother' (*Tak-lel-mo*), for the locality of this hamlet is exceptionally overgrown with wormwood; 'The Foot mother' (*Sang-dyang-mo*): this hamlet is one of the very few which lies at the *foot* of the tropical forge of the Tista-river; 'the Stockade mother' (*Tung-sung-mo*) this village near Darjiling occupies the site of an old stockade; 'the sloping-field mother' (*Ling-lam-mo*), 'the Namchi mother' (*Nam-tsii-mo*), and thus we also have 'the Darjiling mother' for those born at Darjiling (*Darjeling-mo*). The only group of the tribe, it may be added, which does not bear this affix of 'mother' is the highest section or *A-den-pan-tso*[2]) from which, as its name denotes, the kings (*Pano*) and the ministers (*A-den*) used to be drawn — now however its members have a preponderating strain of Tibetan blood.

As instances of others of these archaic words and phrases whose meanings have been forgotten by the Lepchas, but which seem to me to be apparently of a descriptive character, may be cited the words and phrases qualifying 'fields' and 'world', namely '*Ku-rah-mik*' and '*zoo*'. In the former the words literally read 'bosom-stone-below', which would read 'the fields on the bosom of stone underneath.' The prefix *Ku* also is used for 'clothes', with the same meaning as Tibetan '*pö*', (goe) a coat, and *gur*, a tent, in either case would give the sense of 'the fields clothing the bosom of the stones'. Whilst the word joined to 'world' means 'rain' (*zo* or *so*, which is literally applicated to the Lepcha part of the world as it is one of the rainiest sites on the globe; but probably it also meant originally the rain of the eyes or *tears*, and was perhaps thus used by the weary toiling Lepcha in the pessimistic sense of 'tearful world'.

The homonymic character of the language also, would suggest the possibility that some of these archaic words are descriptive as in the tonic Chinese and Burmese, such as 'the *flat-thing* plate', 'the *round-thing* bottle' etc. It is to be hoped that this interesting question will be pursued by philologists.

The spirits and deities of the tribe are referred to in these songs, and require a little description, as they show the primitive conception of the Lepchas in regard to God, and the deification of natural objects and of their ancestors. The Lepcha gods and godlings are

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[1]) Not *Mung* as stated by Mr. Risley (loc. cit. IV. Appendix 88); this word means 'devil'.
[2]) The affix *tso* is interpreted as 'stock or lineage'.

776 very numerous; but none of the many so-called Lepcha deities enumerated by Mr. Risley [1]) are Lepcha at all — all of them are purely Tibetan Lamaistic gods of Hindoo type, even to their names. The truly Lepcha divinities, on the contrary, are mostly of an animistic type. The majority are either the malignant ghosts of deceased ancestors or the spirits inhabitating natural objects — for the Lepcha views every animal, plant, river and stone as having a spiritual personality like his own.

The benevolent class of spirits are called *Rdam* in contradistinction to the malicious *Mung* who are supposed to cause disease, death and other disasters. The chief of the good spirits is *Tu-shi Tak-bo Rdam* [2]) or "The Sky-existing Head-Father-Spirit", who also is called *Tushi-ting* [3]) or "The Sky-existing Lord". This ancient name for the chief Lepcha divinity was transferred to a Lamaist Saint by the Lama who composed the afore mentioned *Tushe-sung* in order to secure for his Lamaist hero the homage and worship of the Lepchas [4]). Many of the minor good spirits are of the nature of good fairies. One of these is a water nymph called 'The Rainbow Fairy' (*Tung-kung-mit*) who haunts the rainbow spray of rivers and cascades; and those who would fish at such places usually worship her [5]). Those spirits are sometimes entitled 'The Unseen' (*Mā*) and the prayer to them is called *Mā-z*.

The malignant devils or *Mung* [6]) are of many kinds. Those who infest the depths of the forest are called "Angry fire" (*Mi-gdut*) and in appearance like flames of fire as tall as the highest trees. Those inhabiting swampy muddy springs are *Lang-nong* [7]) and those [153] haunting rocks and caves are *Lang-s'i*. These latter cause fatal dropsy in those persons who desecrate their haunts by lighting fires or soiling the stones in the vicinity. The especial abode of the chief Mung, who is called 'The father Devil', is at a rock amidst ruinous landslips on the gorge of Sivok [8]) where the great affluent river of the Sikhimese mountains, the Tista, rushes into the plains. Another celebrated Mung is "The goge" (*A-kyong*) who inhabits a cliff in the forest of Gel below Darjiling.

Amongst deified ancestors the chief are Fodung Ting and Tek-kong Tek and their wives Ne-zong Ñyo and Ne-Kong Nai. These are the first traditional chiefs of the tribe, and the name Tek-kong, meaning 'to preserve independence', is suggestive of some struggle in which this legendary chief was successful [9]), though the Lepchas never seem to have [622] developed any organised coherence or polity. Their so-called 'Kings' were only headmen, and lived in huts little better than the poorest members of the tribe.

Worship is rendered almost exclusively to the bad spirits and not to the good. For,

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● 192 [1]) loc. cit. 9.

[2]) *Tu-shi* is from *Tu* sky and *shi* to be. *Tak*, a contraction for *Tiak* head, and *bo* father — literally 'the giver'.

[3]) *Ting* (*A-Ting*) = lord or supreme, probably from *Ting*, to soar aloft (? hence *Ting-kyi*, the Kestrel or Sparrow-hawk). Compare with Burmese '*A-tang*', honorific exclamation to superiors.

[4]) The name in this book is altered to *Tu-she*, the Tibetan *Shi* a judge being substituted for the Lepcha affix *Shi*.

[5]) Two classes of spirits incidentally mentioned by Mr. M. (p. 21) are 'personal demons' *Nang-lyan-no* and *Ke-t'ang-fi*, guardians of males and females respectively.

[6]) This word is perhaps related to the Chinese *Mo*, a devil.

[7]) This *Lang* is said to mean „fallen down" and not *Lang*, a stone, though this is doubtful.

[8]) *Sēd-fak*, literally impenetrable jungle, debris or peelings. This wild ravine is lined by the debris of the inner mountains and overgrown with densest jungle.

[9]) Other 'Kings', who are mentioned in songs, are Turve and Sākong. This last was said by the Lamas to have visited Hades and returned to tell the tale — a *Do-lok* — as noted by me in my Buddhism of Tibet p. 168.

23: Benedict
184, 192, 582, 591, 602, 611, 613, 614, 616, 618, 621

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/For lists of kinship terms, and for excellent and detailed information concerning correlations between kinship terminology, patterns of behavior, and social institutions, see category 601./